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fen von Goethe selbst sagen: Es kann die Spur von seinen Erdentagen nicht in Aeonen untergehn. Denn noch hat die Poesie nicht aufgehört, auch in der modernen Gesellschaft ihre Berechtigung, ihren heiligen, unvergänglichen Wert zu behaupten. Es ist Goethe gewesen, der ihr die neue, richtige Bahn anwies, und alle modernen Versuche, von dieser Bahn abzuweichen, müssen als verfehlt bezeichnet werden. Während die Naturwissenschaft seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters damit bemüht ist, die Natur als grossen Mechanismus aufzufassen, hat sich das Gefühl des Lebens, von dessen Dasein wir in unserer inneren Erfahrung überzeugt sind, wenngleich es die Wissenschaft nie erklären kann, in die Poesie zurückgezogen. Und kein Dichter hat dem Gefühl des Lebens in unserem Herzen und in der Natur solch gewaltigen Ausdruck gegeben, wie unser Goethe. Während die Forschung sich abmüht, der Natur mit Hebeln und mit Schrauben ihr Geheimnis abzuringen, singt der Dichter:

Erhabner Geist, du gabst mir, gabst mir alles,
Warum ich bat Du hast mir nicht umsonst
Dein Angesicht im Feuer zugewendet,
Gabst mir die herrliche Natur zum Königreich,
Kraft, sie zu fühlen, zu geniessen. Nicht
Kalt staunenden Besuch erlaubst du nur,
Vergönntest mir in ihre tiefe Brust
Wie in den Busen eines Freunds zu schauen.
Du führst die Reihe der Lebendigen
Vor mir vorbei, und lehrst mich meine Brüder
Im stillen Busch, in Luft und Wasser kennen.

Wer darum das Heilige, Ewige und Unverletzliche der Menschenbrust sucht, das uns die Wissenschaft weder geben, noch erklären, noch nehmen kann, der wird sich an Goethe wenden, den tiefsten Kenner und gründlichsten Ausleger des Lebens.

JULIUS GOEBEL.

Stanford University, Cal.

THE TIME ELEMENT IN ENGLISH VERSE.

THE relation of so-called "quantity" to the accentual rhythm of English verse has always been the bugbear of metrists. The subject might almost be said to be one which, like prophecy, maddens those who undertake it. From the days of Harvey's and Spenser's correspondence to our own time, it has remained unsettled. The Elizabethans, as is well known,

made wild experiments in quantitative measures; much later Goldsmith wrote an essay on Versification,¹ in which he said—among other things—that the only difference between classical metres and ours is that the former count the feet and we count the syllables; Coleridge made a similar mistake in his famous preface to *Christabel*; Southey made the remarkable statement that there is one true spondee in English, and only one, namely, *Egypt*;² and, almost in our own time, Mr. Spedding and Mr. Munro were led by Mr. Matthew Arnold's remarks "On Translating Homer" into a fruitless contention as to the possibility of classical dactyls and spondees in English. These are a few illustrations out of many.

Nearly all modern writers on the theory of verse have admitted that English words have no fixed syllabic quantities such as are postulated for the classical languages, but that English quantities, so far as they exist, are of varied and (in part, at least) subjective character. Some exceptions, it appears, are to be found among the poets. Thus Charles Kingsley wrote that he believed that "the theory of our prosody depending on accent is false, and that it really is very nearly identical with the Greek."³ And Tennyson, oddly enough, while he had small respect for English hexameters, seems to have regarded English words as having quantitative values analogous to those of Latin and Greek, for he altered Coleridge's well-known line,

"In the hexameter rises the fountain's silvery column,"

so as to make it quantitative, and, furthermore, is reported to have said that he knew "the quantity of every English word except 'scissors.'"

Metrists who have agreed that English words have no fixed quantities, are still at variance as to the relation of syllabic time-values to the element of accent in English verse. Two extremes may at once be distinguished: that represented by the common statement of German writers that the rhythm of our verse is based wholly on accent, and that represented most notably by the late Mr. Sidney Lanier, who held that, in the recitation of all English

¹ Essay xviii, of the author's collection.

² Preface to *A Vision of Judgment*.

³ *Letters and Memories*, ed. by Mrs. Kingsley. Vol. I, pp. 338 ff.

verse, syllabic time-values are made as exact and regular, and hence as accurately measurable, as the notes of music. Mr. Lanier, of course, applied his theory with thorough consistency, and represented all sorts of English verse, even of the Anglo Saxon period, in musical notation. He is almost universally regarded, however, as having been led by the analogy between music and poetry to carry his method of scansion to quite impossible lengths. The most characteristic example of this is his representation of the common iambic measure in "three-four" time, each accented syllable being given a time-value twice as long as that of the alternating unaccented syllables,—a method of reading which is easily shown to be contrary to all common practice, if we apply it by beating three-four time to any normal passage in Shakspeare. It should never be forgotten, however, that a debt of gratitude is owed to Mr. Lanier for being the first to emphasize adequately the musical elements in our verse.

Besides those who make English verse to depend wholly on accent, and those who give the element of accurate time-values in it an equal place with the time-values in music, there has always been a third class disposed to confuse the two elements of quantity and accent. Of this class the most conspicuous example of recent times is Poe, who in his "Rationale of Verse" constantly spoke of accented and unaccented syllables as "long" and "short" respectively, and was even disposed to carry the identification into classical verse itself, treating the accepted scansion of Latin verses with small respect. This essay of Poe's has lately been defended by Mr. John M. Robertson, in the interesting Appendix to his *New Essays Toward a Critical Method* (John Lane, 1897). Mr. Robertson was led by his friendly attitude toward all Poe's work, and his doubtless well-founded impression that Poe is not rightly appreciated in his own country, to develop at considerable length the views of the latter regarding the unsatisfactory character of the accepted treatment of classical measures. Unfortunately he has deliberately perpetuated the confusion which he found in Poe in the use of the terms "accent" and "quantity." He even says that the attempt to distinguish them is ill-founded, "that quantity in speaking *must* amount sub-

stantially to the same thing as stress," and—again—that "Poe's identification of stress with length is perfectly sound." Whatever be the fundamental fact here, the use of terms cannot be commended. If quantity is swallowed up in accent, so that accent alone dominates our verse, that is one thing; if the conditions are such that a heavy stress and a long quantity nearly always coincide, that is also a possible doctrine; but that is not to say that the two things should be identified. If all tall men wear long coats, or if all tall men wear no coats at all, it follows in neither case that tallness and long-coatedness are the same thing. It has been shown by Helmholtz, and by plenty of others, that duration of sound and intensity of sound are perfectly distinguishable facts, and that the one has no necessary connection with the other. The problem is: how are they related in practice? So far as Latin verse is concerned, it is not hard to see that there was frequently a tendency to *avoid* the coincidence of syllabic length and word-accent.

It has already been observed that Mr. Lanier did good service in emphasizing the analogy between poetry and music, but that he carried the analogy too far. It may, therefore, be worth while to consider, at just this point, the elements of likeness and difference in the two sorts of rhythm. Music and verse are both rhythmical sound: that is the starting-point. Mr. Lanier showed with sufficient certainty that rhythm is dependent upon both *time* and *accent*. He said, to be sure, that "time is *the* essential"⁴ element; but this was not altogether what he meant, as he himself pointed out that the ear insistently marks off time by the sense of variation of stress, even when there is no real variation, as in the case of the tick-tack of the clock. He also pointed out how accent marks the rhythm of music quite as truly as that of verse, the rule being that ordinarily the first note of each measure shall receive a special stress. It seems, then, that the rhythm of music is based on the recurrence of accented sounds at equal time-intervals. The same thing is true of the rhythm of verse. For every kind of metre there is a normal verse-rhythm which is present in the mind as the basis on which the verse is built up, no matter how

⁴ *Science of English Verse*, p. 65.

many variations may constantly occur. This normal rhythm is formed by a succession of accents at exactly equal time-intervals, such as can be marked off by a metronome, or by the mechanical beating of the foot on the floor. We realize that the verse as commonly read frequently departs from this regularity of intervals, but we say that we "scan" it when we preserve them faithfully. The normal interval we call a "foot." Exception must be taken, therefore, it seems to me, to another contention of Mr. Robertson's, namely, that "there is no time-unit." "Our feet," he says, "are a pure convention, and the sole rhythmic fact is the fluctuant relativity of long and short, or stress and slur." I am glad to be able to believe that the fundamental rhythmic fact is something less vague than this. The almost universal practice of measuring verse by theoretically equal "feet" seems to attest the real character of the intervals which it is sought to measure.

In both music and verse, the rhythm is based on the recurrence of accented sounds at equal time-intervals. The only difference is in the emphasis which one naturally places on the respective parts of the statement. In music we feel that the fact of fundamental importance is that the measures shall be equal in time, and that the accent is a mere means of marking this equality; while in verse we feel that the recurrence of the accents is the fundamental fact (a feeling borne out by the history of English rhythms), and that the equality of time-intervals is an additional source of pleasure. In music we regard any departure from the equal intervals as somewhat exceptional; but it would be strange verse which could be read with any satisfaction to the beat of a metronome. The normal rhythm suffers, however, if either of the two elements is wholly removed.

When we look for further distinctions between verse and music, it is noticeable that not only are the measures of music of mathemati-

cally equal length, but that all the sounds bear exact time relations to each other; each is either half as long, or twice as long, or a quarter as long, or four times as long, as its neighbor. The number of the sounds in a given measure, however, constantly varies; it is sufficient that the total length be that of the full measure. In verse these conditions are reversed. The separate sounds, while they vary in length, are not mathematically coördinated as to duration by the ordinary reader. It is easy to see that in a normal iambic line the accented syllables are not prolonged to precisely twice the length of the unaccented; but it is almost as difficult to say just what the time-relation of any two adjacent syllables is, as to say that one is stressed just twice as strongly as the other. On the other hand, the *number* of the syllables (that is, in modern English verse) is tolerably constant. In common iambs we have to explain exceptionally any appearance of three or four syllables in the place of two; while, on the other hand, it would be strange music in which the number of notes within each measure should remain constant for any considerable time.

Two other fundamental distinctions, namely those which differentiate music from verse *apart* from the elements of rhythm, may be mentioned for the sake of completeness. Music, apart from rhythm, characteristically depends on variation of pitch, and only incidentally (as in the case of the changing stops in a pipe organ) on variation of quality of sound, while verse, apart from rhythm, characteristically depends on variation of sound-quality,—that is, on the different sounds of different words,—and only incidentally on changes of pitch. Again, the changing sounds of music are only vaguely symbolic, while the changing sounds of verse are symbolic of definite ideas.

For the sake of easy comparison we may put these observations in a rough sort of table:

MUSIC.

Rhythmical sound, i. e.

Recurrence of accented sounds at *equal time-intervals*.

Separate sounds mathematically related in length, and constantly varying in number and arrangement inside rhythmical groups.

Apart from rhythm, dependent on variation of *pitch* (incidentally on *quality*).

Sounds vaguely symbolic.

VERSE

Recurrence of *accented* sounds at equal time-intervals.

Separate sounds not mathematically related in length, and generally with unchanged number and arrangement inside rhythmical groups.

Apart from rhythm, dependent on variation of *quality*, (incidentally on *pitch*).

Sounds symbolic of definite ideas.

Before we go any further in the use of terms of time-value in respect of English words, it will be well to consider just what we mean by a "long" or a "short" syllable in English. It has already been indicated that the ear recognizes no such exact proportions in the quantity of syllables as are recognized for musical notes, or as are postulated for the syllables in Greek and Latin verse. It must also be remembered that the terms "long" and "short," as commonly used of English vowel sounds, are practically without significance for the matter of real quantity. They are applied for historical reasons, and do not represent existing facts. Thus we call the *o* in "hotel" *long*, and that in "cot" *short*, because the respective sounds are those historically associated with originally long and short vowels; but it is fairly clear that the *o* of "cot" takes rather more time in actual utterance than the *o* in "hotel." The so-called "short *o*" is, in fact, a sound so open that it has practically lost the *o*-quality. In the same way what we call "long *e*" is really a closed and prolonged short-*i* sound, and what we call "long *a*" is a short-*e* sound diphthongized. We do not seem to preserve in modern English any intrinsically long vowels such as we assume for early English, and such as we hear in German words like *Saal* and *See*,—sounds which obviously require more time for utterance than others.

How, then, can we speak with accuracy of syllables of different length in modern English? It may be said, in the first place, that we have a large number of genuine diphthongs, such as appear in words like *fine*, *frown* and *foil*. Such double sounds, from the very fact that they *are* double, as well as from the fact that (when of an open quality, as in the instances given) they require the vocal organs to traverse considerable distances in their pronunciation, may be assumed to require a longer time for utterance than monophthongs. Even such a sound as that represented by *au* or *aw*, while it has lost much of its diphthongal quality in modern English, seems still to sound longer than most monophthongs. In none of these cases, however, is it common to make the element of length at all conspicuous, except where it coincides with strong stress, and it requires a moment's reasoning to assure one's

self that the vowel in *fine* is any longer than that in *fat*. I question, then, whether the variations of length in our vowel sounds can be regarded as of significance in metrical time. A word like "ought" or "out", should it occur in a place in the verse where a syllable was to be allotted the briefest possible time, would be passed over with due rapidity by nearly all readers, with no thought that the vowel sound required delay.

But in the earlier languages a syllable might be long, not only from containing a long vowel, but from the presence of consonants following the vowel in such a manner as to prolong the utterance of the whole. Are such phenomena found in modern English? It is certain that, as in the case of vowels, prolonged consonantal sounds are avoided, being passed over rapidly wherever possible, and that consonants are almost never doubled in actual utterance. Thus we have no syllables prolonged by double consonants after the manner of Italian words like *madonna*; and it may be said that, for most of us, the attempt to recognize the classical rules of length "by position," such as was made by the Elizabethan metrists, is impracticable. Nevertheless, we cannot get over the fact that two or three consonants commonly require more time for utterance than one; and in words like *strength*, *vexed*, *flushed*, and the like, almost everyone would admit that the length of the whole syllable is quite perceptible. Such syllabic lengths are, in fact, taken into consideration in the writing and reading of verse. Even the juxtaposition of two simple consonants, if they are of such a character that they cannot easily coalesce in pronunciation, will serve to lengthen the preceding syllable by making it—as we say—"closed." If we construct a brief anapestic line like this,

"For a man | ought to rise | by his might,"

the light syllables are all short enough to go "trippingly on the tongue." But if we change it thus,

"For this man | ought by might | to arise,"

we have injured the first and second foot by lengthening. The syllable "this" is too long for its place, by reason of the final *s* and the *m* that follows; and the syllable "ought," which

was short enough before, has been unpleasantly lengthened by changing the following *t* to a *b*, with the result that the *t* in "ought" has to be fully pronounced and, as it were, brought to a stand-still, before the *b* can be begun. A final *r*, it may also be noticed, is particularly tenacious of its right to be counted in syllabic time, in cases where it cannot be carried over into the following syllable. Dr. Child has just called my attention to the possible metrical significance of the negligent pronunciation of final *r* by New Englanders and others. In such cases the consonant is practically lost, and the preceding vowel may be said to be diphthongized, and hence lengthened. On the other hand, if the *r* is really given its rights, as is almost never the case in this country, it requires a perceptible time for utterance. These illustrations will serve to indicate how we may find in English verse syllabic lengths, not absolute but relative, dependent on consonant combinations.

This is perhaps as much as can be admitted for the existence of intrinsically long and short English syllables. But there is much more to be said for syllables made long or short artificially, when certain conditions are present. If we address a friend in surprise, saying "*Why, John!*" we not only throw a heavier stress on both the words uttered than they would ordinarily bear, but we perceptibly prolong them. In like manner, we realize that quite unimportant words, especially proclitics (like the italicized words in the phrase "*The land of the free*"), are not only unstressed, but are hurried over in less time than the accented words. Examples like this suggest what may in fact be admitted as a general statement, that accented syllables are very commonly prolonged. This is not, as we have seen, from any essential connection between the nature of accent and the nature of quantity. In certain cases, indeed, unaccented syllables have a tendency to be prolonged even more than those that bear the stress, as in words like *follow*, *morrow*, and others in which the final sound is easily capable of prolongation; in music such words are very commonly sung to an eighth note plus a quarter, although the short note is accented. The frequent coincidence, then, of stress and prolongation is due

simply to the operation of the same cause: the grammatical or rhetorical importance of the syllable in question. A syllable will frequently be prolonged simply from its importance in the view of the speaker, or shortened from its lack of importance, just as it will usually be stressed when important, and left with little or no stress when unimportant. The effect will rarely be such as to give the syllables time-values bearing the exact proportions of one to two and the like, and they cannot, therefore, be easily represented by half, quarter, and eighth notes; but the fact that their length does vary with an approach to regularity may explain why Mr. Lanier attempted to represent them by such musical notation. This connection of stress and quantity, too, must be the cause of Mr. Robertson's attempt to identify the two. His statement that "quantity, in fact, in spoken verse, consists of stress *and* of the consonantal total of syllables," may be regarded as much more satisfactory than those previously quoted from his essay. It is, however, not quite accurate, and is made more misleading by what follows.

One other kind of syllable length, and that the most important for metrical purposes, remains to be considered. It is well established that *accents* not only differ according to the familiar syllabic stresses of the words used, but that in the reading of verse they are constantly varied in such a manner as to effect compromises between the regular word-accent and the normal verse-accent, when the two do not correspond of themselves. This being the case, we might well expect similar phenomena in respect of time-values. Separate syllables, the length of which is not based on absolute quantities, and which so easily vary their length in coincidence with varying stress, might be artificially lengthened and shortened in the reading of verse, in order to preserve the equal intervals between the accents, when the words of the verse would not of themselves fall into these equal measures. Such subjective variation of quantities is undoubtedly a matter of constant occurrence in the right reading of verse. It is most commonly practiced, and therefore most easily recognized, in the case of *shortened* time-values,—as in the line

"Do you see | this square | old yel | low book | I toss,"

where it is evident that the syllables "do you"

are shortened so as to occupy together the time of one normal syllable. The opposite practice, that of *lengthening* syllables so as to make up for insufficient time-values, is not so familiar, because it is not so commonly practiced. We shall presently see, however, how it ought to appear.

Once more, for the sake of convenience, let us attempt to put into the form of a summary the conclusions that have been reached. A syllable in English may be said to be *long*, for metrical purposes, from :

- [1. The naturally long character of its vowel-sound, due to diphthongization or *open* quality.]
2. The presence of one or more consonants requiring a perceptible time for utterance.
3. Prolongation by the speaker
 - a) because of the importance of the syllable, or
 - b) because of the time which it ought to occupy in the place where it stands in the verse.

With these facts in mind, let us look at a few verses which will serve to illustrate the varying time-elements that constantly appear in English poetry.

- 1) The lone | couch of | his ev | erlast | ing sleep.
- 2) Of man's | first dis | obe | dience, and | the fruit.
- 3) My very | heart faints | and my whole | soul grieves.
- 4) Come, dear | children, | let us a | way.
- 5) Come from the | dying | moon and | blow.

The first of these, if read as a natural prose phrase, has no properly metrical character. The conflict of word and verse accent, in the first place, is such that the second foot contains a "trochee."⁵ Moreover the syllables "lone couch" are naturally long, as they stand here emphasized, and "of his" are exceedingly short. In common speech, again, the first three words of the verse would be divided by a distinct pause from the last four. Such a group of words is by no means metrical. We cannot remedy the matter by accenting either "of" or "his," and we should do injury to the sense by depriving either "lone"

⁵ Although emphasizing, in this paper, certain quantitative elements of English verse, I have no desire to use the well-known classical names of feet to express time-values. They are well established among us as descriptive of phenomena purely accentual, and these are probably the only kind of phenomena which it is practicable to name definitely or to mark off into feet.

or "couch" of its full accent. We can, however, *lengthen* the words "of his" beyond what they would have in prose utterance, giving each a distinct moment for enunciation, without any accompanying stress; and this, I believe, is what a reader will do who has an ear for the metre. In this case the phrase-pause between "couch" and "of" will be less marked than in prose utterance. There is another way, it is true, to make the line metrical; that is, by increasing this pause so considerably as to occupy the second half of the second foot, and put "of his," rapidly pronounced as in prose, together with "ev-" in the third foot. Some readers would adopt a method approaching this, but neither sense nor rhythm would be so well satisfied.

The second example quoted, the first line of *Paradise Lost*, is of a similar character. Mr. Robertson makes considerable use of it as showing the vanity of the usual method of dividing verses into equal feet. He quotes approvingly Professor Shairp's account of the way in which Clough explained the line :

"The two feet 'first disobe-' took up the time of four syllables, two iambic feet: the voice rested awhile on the word 'first;' then passed swiftly over 'diso-,' then rested again on 'be-' so as to recover the previous hurry."

This is indeed the way the words would be repeated in prose, but such a reading neglects the rhythm. In the second foot one could and should give the syllable 'dis-' full syllabic time, instead of hurrying over it as in prose,—a policy assisted by the fact that it frequently has a marked secondary accent. Conversely, one should give 'first' less time-value than it would have in prose, without thereby depriving it of stress. In the fourth foot we have, as so commonly, two very short and light syllables standing on either side of a pause. In prose utterance the word 'and' would be allowed practically no time-value, but would be disposed of, as usual, by a mere nasal click. This *can* be done also in the verse, by permitting the pause at the comma to fill up the fourth foot, and counting 'and' as the opening of the fifth. But I should prefer to give 'and' a fairly distinct utterance for metrical purposes, and thus make out the normal length of the fourth foot,—still leaving the word without perceptible

stress. It is not probable, however, that anyone would read this line so as to preserve feet of perfectly equal time-value. There will commonly be a compromise, in such cases, between the typical syllable-groups of the verse and the syllable-groups of the words considered as prose. But that is not to say that the conception of the normal verse-scheme need be abandoned altogether.

The third line is another quoted by Mr. Robertson as showing the futility of dividing verses into feet. Taken by itself, or even with the following verses, it must be admitted to be puzzling. But when one looks up the poem it is seen to be a clear case of four-stress verse,—“iambic tetrameter.”

“The air is damp, and hush’d, and close”

is the first line of the stanza, with perfectly regular feet. With this in mind one sees not only how the line in question is to be explained theoretically, but how it is to be read. “Very” is to be treated practically as a monosyllable,—the “y” a sort of appoggiatura. The third foot (“and my whole”) is a substituted anapest, the first two syllables being naturally short and unstressed.⁶ The second and fourth feet are spondees, containing syllables naturally long in the place where they stand: one must shorten them a little, in the reading, without omitting the stress, in order to preserve the equality of feet. Read in this fashion, the line is by no means troublesome among a number of tetrameters.

The fourth example is from Mr. Arnold’s *Forsaken Merman*, a poem—it may be said in passing—which is throughout a metrical study of the very first order. At the outset the metrical type is dactylic, as is indicated by the second line—

“Down and away below.”

In the opening line, however, there is only one dactyl, that in the fourth foot. “Come dear” and “children” must each in some way take the time of three syllables. The additional time may be filled out either by lengthening a

6 I call “and” naturally short, even where it stands before a word beginning with a consonant, because it is so neglected in common utterance that I do not think any ordinary ear would feel the length of the successive consonants. The *d* of “and” is of course rarely pronounced, except where it precedes a vowel,

syllable in the reading, or by a pause. In this case either method is possible. There are natural places for pauses after “come” and “children”; and the syllables “come” and “child-” are capable of slight prolongation without unpleasant effect. In actual reading one would probably follow each method in part, with the usual compromised result. It is to be noticed that at the end of the line there is a pause equal in time to the two short syllables which would normally conclude the dactyl; then we are ready for the opening dactyl of the following line. The reader with an ear for exact rhythm will find this whole poem full of pauses of delicately varying musical length.

The fifth and last of the examples is also in dactylic rhythm. The irregularity, again, is that we have two dissyllabic feet, “dying” and “moon and,” which should be equal in time to the normal foot “under the.” How is the additional length to be obtained? Once more, by either pause or prolongation. A recent writer on metre quotes the line with a scansion which prolongs the second syllable of “dying” so as to make the word a *quantitative* iambus. I am doubtful as to whether any reader would prolong the “-ing” to twice the length of “dy-”, but it would not be impossible to do so; at any rate the word is an interesting case where length and stress do not necessarily coincide. If neither syllable is prolonged, a pause may be made after the word which will fill up the length of the foot. In like manner, in the next foot, one may easily prolong “moon,” or may pause immediately after it. In both cases I am disposed to think that each method would be followed in part by most good readers.

These examples, taken together, illustrate, perhaps as well as any chosen at random could do, the constant shiftings and compromises of time-value which a reader of poetry should observe in order to preserve duly both the natural utterance of the words and the equality of the rhythmical intervals. It is obvious that any interpretation of a given line will have much that is subjective about it; one cannot hope, then, that any small group of examples will be received as proof of anything, unless the given explanation of their rhythm is admitted to be typical. A prolonged considera-

tion of the actual reading of poetry has led me to such interpretations as those just indicated. I hope, at some later time, to verify them by facts more scientifically gathered. It must be admitted that comparatively few readers of verse make any consistent use of such a system of compromises as I have described, except in the simple case where syllables are shortened in order to preserve the obvious rhythm. Most readers fix their attention either on the scheme of the metre or on the significance of the words *as words*, and thus exaggerate all the difficulties which variable verse presents. The good reader, it seems to me, is one who can perceive at the same time the fundamental rhythm of the verse and the constantly varying rhythms of the phrases involved, and who will adapt his utterance so as to show the greatest possible respect to both.

Finally, let us try to state as definitely as possible the laws that govern the time-element in our verse.

1. *In the normal verse, accents appear at equal time-intervals.* This, of course, does not preclude such variations as inversion, excess, or defect of accent. The unit of measure, the foot, is the distance not between the accents as they stand, but between the points where they belong in the fundamental rhythm.

2. *There is a tendency toward the coincidence of long and accented, and of short and unaccented syllables.* This is true in two different senses. In the first place, as we have seen, it means that an accented syllable is likely to be lengthened, and an unaccented syllable to be shortened, for the same reason that it is either with or without stress; namely, its relative importance. In the second place, it means that syllables which are of themselves perceptibly long are avoided in those places in the verse where very light syllables are expected, and—to a less degree—are preferred where heavy syllables are expected. This is by no means universally true, particularly in common iambic measures; but in dactylic and anapestic, where there is comparatively little time allowed for the two unaccented syllables in the foot, one is jarred by the appearance of an intrinsically long syllable in the place of one of these light syllables, even if it can be uttered without

stress.⁷ And a sensitive ear will object to the repeated presence of strong accents on syllables which are by nature incapable of prolongation.

3. *In the reading of verse, the length of syllables is varied artificially, so as to preserve the theoretically equal accent-intervals.*

4. *In like manner, pauses are constantly introduced in order to preserve these intervals.*

Rules 3 and 4, it is hoped, have been sufficiently explained by the preceding examples.

These laws, as here stated, are admittedly somewhat vague. I do not yet feel ready to say whether it may be feasible to state them with more exactness of detail. So far as I am aware, the only systematic attempt in this direction was made by Mr. Goodell, in his article on "Quantity in English Verse," in the *Proceedings of the American Philological Society* for 1885. Mr. Goodell states such laws as these:

"The thesis becomes a triseme if the next syllable bears the ictus. No syllable can be placed in this position which is incapable of prolongation."

"If the arsis is monosyllabic, a short vowel in the thesis followed by a single consonant is not lengthened by the ictus; the arsis is instead prolonged, giving an inverted trochee."

"With arsis monosyllabic, the strong tendency is to make the thesis short."

I have not yet sufficiently mastered Mr. Goodell's terms to be certain of criticising his rules intelligently. Unfortunately, he bases his work on what seems to me the fundamental misconception that the syllables in English verse bear such exact mathematical proportions to each other as to be capable of representation in ordinary musical time. He has, however, the same idea as to what quantity really is in English verse, that I have tried to make clear. Possibly the rules laid down in his article are on the right track. But since in all cases of irregular time-values there is so much room for subjective interpretation, and since the actual time-values of utterance seem usually to be compromises incapable of exact mathematical description, I am disposed to

⁷ Examples, quoted by Mr. Larminie, are found in the lines:

"For whoso *proves* kingly in craft,"

and

"Time sheds them like snow on *strange* regions."

think it improbable that any statements more definite than the four general laws already laid down would be found practically serviceable. I should certainly (as has already been indicated) not try to name feet or describe lines on any basis other than that of accent. I should call a foot of two stressed syllables a spondee, and one of two unstressed syllables a pyrrhic, remembering that the *length* of the two syllables would vary so as to preserve the general equality of the rhythmical intervals. These terms of classical origin have proved themselves illogically but practically applicable to the phenomena of English verse, and if used with consistency are of no little convenience. The important thing, however, is not a matter of terms; it is that the musical rhythms of our verse, consisting of varying time-values delicately marked off by accents, should not be lost sight of either in theory or practice.

Since most of this article was written, I have been led by Mr. Robertson's allusion to it to read the very interesting essay of Mr. William Larminie on "The Development of English Metres," published in the *Contemporary Review* for November, 1894. I am pleased to find in this what seems to me to be a clearer statement of the place of quantity in English verse than I have found elsewhere in print. This is particularly true in the treatment of long and short syllables in such measures as the anapestic, examples of which I have already borrowed from Mr. Larminie. The principal differences between his attitude and mine may be stated very briefly. He is disposed to exaggerate, as it seems to me, the element of fixed or natural quantity, and to use—at times—the terms "long" and "short" in the purely traditional sense in which they are applied to vowels like *o* in "cote" and "cot." The most marked characteristic, however, of Mr. Larminie's treatment of the subject, is that he assumes certain quantitative principles to be established, and judges the poets by their conformity to them. It cannot be said that he does this with any great injustice. My effort, however, has been what I trust may seem more unpretentious: to call nothing unclean which poets actually practice, but to show how their variations from fixed types may and should be atoned for by the reader. That very much of

Mr. Browning's verse is, as Mr. Larminie points out, in theoretically bad quantity, perhaps no one would deny. Neither need it be denied that very much of it *can* be read in satisfactory rhythmical time. The truth is, both sides are right. Some one must lay down laws for the poets, some one for the readers. There is, perhaps, about as much chance that the advice of the one will be followed, as that of the other.

RAYMOND MACDONALD ALDEN.

University of Pennsylvania.

GRAIL ROMANCES.

The High History of the Holy Grail, translated from the French by SEBASTIAN EVANS. Two volumes. London: Dent.

THE original of the present work is the Old-French romance best known as *Perlesvaus*,¹ the title as given by the translator being an adaptation of the name under which the romance is, at times, referred to in the body of the text.² In general, the work is a worthy addition to the number of Grail romances now accessible in English form. The two volumes comprising it are attractively printed in the usual good taste of the *Temple Classics*, and contain, besides the translation itself, an epilogue by the translator on the literary history of the romance. The volumes are also embellished with two frontispieces and title-pages, by Sir Edward Burne-Jones, which add considerably to the charm of the publication.

As a translator Dr. Evans has ably fulfilled a laborious task, and the idea of translating as far as possible in the manner of Malory was certainly a happy one. The class of readers that cares for such works as this is apt to have already some acquaintance with the *Morte d'Arthur*, so that the imitation of Malory's style of writing used by Dr. Evans is as suitable a clothing for the romance as could well have been found. Moreover, in this way much of the original flavor of the romance has been kept, and the mistake so often made of translating into "archaized" Modern English has

¹ *Perceval le Gallois, ou le Conte du Graal*, publié d'après les mss. orig. par Ch. Potvin, Tome 1: le Roman en Prose. Mons: 1866.

² *Li hauts livres (estoires) du Graal*.